DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 260 599 FL 015 188

AUTHOR	Rassias, John A., Ed.; Cormier, Raymond J., Ed.
TITLE	The Ram's Horn, Volume I, Numbers 3 and 4.
PUB DATE	82
NOTE	80p.; Proceedings of a Special Session at the Annual Meeting of the Modern Languages Association (San Francisco, CA, December 1979).
AVAILABLE FROM	Language Outreach and the Rassias Foundation, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH 03755.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Collected Works - Conference Proceedings (021)
JOURNAL CIT	The Ram's Horn; v1 n3-4 Win-Spr 1980-81 1982
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Book Reviews; *Classroom Techniques; College Second Language Programs; Conference Proceedings; *Dramatics; Higher Education; *Intensive Language Courses; *Literature Appreciation; Program Descriptions; Secondary Education; *Second Language Instruction; *Spanish; Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS	Rassias Method

ABSTRACT

This combination Winter-Spring 1980-81 and 1982 number of the journal contains several papers which constitute the proceedings of a special session of the December 1979 Modern Language Association annual meeting as well as a separate article and a book review. The conference papers include: "New Views on the Use of Drama and Dramatic Technique in the Teaching of Foreign Languages and Literatures," by D. P. Seniff; "All the Class is a Stage," by J. A. Rassias; "The Oral Interpretation of Literature in the Spanish Language Classroom," by J. Dowling; "Spanish Theatre at the University of Washington," by F. F. Anderson; and "Drama and the Spanish Language Classroom: A Personal Chronicle," by M. A. Compitello. The other article is "The Rassias Intensive Language Method Goes to High School," by J. Creviere, S. Mastenbrook, and P. Peck. The book review, by H. B. Altman, gives an account of Paul Simon's "The Tongue-Tied American: Confronting the Foreign Language Crisis." (MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED260599

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

the Ram's horn

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Raymond J. Cormier

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Volume I, 3 & 4
Winter-Spring 1980-81
1982

JOHN A. RASSIAS
Publisher and
Executive Editor

RAYMOND J. CORMIER
Senior Editor

FL015188

JOIN the growing list of teachers and students and communicators in foreign languages; JOIN the most interesting, vital, provocative, creative, innovative, exciting, dramatic Rassias Language Method adopters—involved in French, German, Greek, Italian and Spanish—among others—; JOIN the Senior Language Consultants of the Rassias Foundation, the national network of experts who already subscribe to The Ram's Horn, a publication of the Rassias Foundation and Language Outreach, Dartmouth College.

the Ram's horn

Recent Contributors Include:

John Rassias on the classroom as theater
George (Bill) Rose on the NYC transit police program
Terry Pickett on the DILM in German at Alabama
Alan Rose on the DILM in German at Idaho
Henry Buckley reviewing drama in the language classroom
Debra Popkin on oral proficiency criteria

—John A. Rassias
Publisher and
Executive Editor

—Raymond J. Cormier
Senior Editor

Annual Subscription: $15.
Single Issue: $4.

The Ram's Horn is a joint publication of The Language Outreach Education office, Dartmouth College and The Rassias Foundation. Its appearance will be quarterly until further notice.

Editorial deadlines: 1 November (winter), 1 February (spring), 1 May (summer), 1 August (fall).

The Ram's Horn welcomes any original or reprinted writings dealing with The Rassias Method/Dartmouth Model and any related topics. The opinions expressed here are not necessarily those of Language Outreach Education, Dartmouth College (LORE), of The Rassias Foundation or of the Editors.

© The Rassias Foundation, 1982
Language Outreach Education
Dartmouth College
Hanover, N.H. 03755

ISSN 0272-2747

CONTENTS

Volume I, 3&4 Winter-Spring 1980-81 & 1982

Special Session, MLA Convention, December 1979, San Francisco, Ca.:

New Views on the Use of Drama and Dramatic Technique in the Teaching of Foreign Languages and Literatures, by Dennis Paul Seniff - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 91

All the Class is a Stage, by John A. Rassias - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 95

The Oral Interpretation of Literature in the Spanish Language Classroom, by John Dowling - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 107

Spanish Theatre at the University of Washington, by Farris F. Anderson - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 117

Drama and the Spanish Language Classroom: A Personal Chronicle, by Malcolm Alan Compitello - - - - - - - - - - - 127

Questions and Answers - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 139

The Rassias Intensive Language Method goes to High School by John Crevière, Susana Mastenbrook and Patricia Peck - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 149

Book Review, Paul Simon, "The Tongue-Tied American: Confronting the Foreign Language Crisis," by Howard B. Altman - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 159

The Ram's Horn—Guidelines for Authors - 163

A Note on Contributors - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 167

This issue is dedicated to
the memory of
Richard L. Admussen.

In Memoriam

Richard L. Admussen, known as Dick to his many friends and colleagues, died last April after a two and one-half year fight with leukemia. Never once during that time did he complain about his illness or about the harsh side-effects of the treatment he had to undergo; his only worry was not for himself but for his wife Judy and their four children. His was the most valiant of suffering, silent, never questioning. In his last spring his sole aim, it seemed, was to finish out the semester, to remain steadfast to colleagues and students. In a way he did that—his funeral and interment took place, perhaps ironically, on the last day of class.

Dick received his A.B. from Washburn University in his native Kansas, majoring not in French but in mathematics. Drawn, however, by the many faceted aspects of twentieth-century French poetry, he started graduate work at the University of Kansas where he was awarded an M.A. in 1960 and his doctorate in 1966. During those years he travelled to Africa where he was instrumental in setting up a health education program and then to France where he spent a year teaching English. At Washington University where he taught for seventeen years, Dick progressed through the academic ranks from Assistant Professor, to Associate, to full Professor; his colleagues in the Department of Romance Languages recognized his superb administrative gifts by selecting him Chairman, a post which he filled with distinction for an all too brief period before his cancer was first diagnosed.

Dick's interest in twentieth-century French literature led to the publication of two books: an annotated bibliography of literary magazines appearing in France from 1914 to 1939 and, recently, a bibliography of Beckett manuscripts. His scholarly endeavors resulted in Washington University's becoming a central location for the manuscripts of Samuel Beckett, a rich source for future research on this dramatist whose work Dick greatly admired.

It is not through his purely scholarly activities, however, that Dick Admussen's lasting influence at Washington Univer-

sity can best be witnessed today. Serving for a decade as the Director of Undergraduate Studies in French, he became increasingly concerned about the curriculum during the seventies when departmental enrollments fell to alarming lows after the abolition of the language requirement for graduation. In 1977 he brought to a truly depressed French program a variation of the Dartmouth Intensive Language Model after he had participated in and had been greatly affected by one of John Rassias's summer workshops. (Dick would later be appointed to the Executive Board of the Rassias Foundation.) From 1977 to this time the effects of Dick's decision to alter radically the undergraduate curriculum continue to be felt: the elementary language program in French has quadrupled in size from 1971 to 1981, two years ago the language laboratory had to be completely renovated in order to respond to the upsurge in student interest, the third-year enrollment doubled in just one year, in 1979 the university opened at the Château de la Hercerie a Summer Language Institute which now has three times the number of undergraduate applicants than we have positions available, and the number of French majors has quadrupled in the last four years. Appropriately enough, it was during Dick's short tenure as chairman that enrollments began to surpass what they had averaged when there was a two-year requirement for graduation from Washington University, a feat, as far as we have been able to document, unparalleled by any institution with no language requirement in the country.

This summer I came across a smudged, yellowing set of index cards, long forgotten in a desk drawer, on which I had taken random notes from my job interviews in 1975. When I got to the card for Washington University, I found that I had written for each professor I had met during my campus interview a word or so of description: one individual was obviously the epitome of a scholar, another an administrator, another a warm, gregarious sort. Having known him for one day, I had put beside "Admussen" the following words: "says he's concerned about <u>human</u> values--I think he means it." I accepted the offer at Washington University in large measure because of the impression Dick Admussen made upon me during that brief visit to the campus years ago, and I have since wondered how many individuals were moved in

like fashion over the years by his modest, unassuming, yet at the same time vitally sincere manner. His concern for his own family's future during his devastating illness without a thought for his own suffering is but a reflection of how he always looked at others. He was, I believe, the most selfless person I have ever known. In a profession sometimes characterized by pretense and by outward trappings of achievement and self-aggrandizement, Dick Admussen's example—as teacher, scholar, administrator, but most of all as human being—touched in profound ways an ideal of devotion to all those around him, the lack of which surely impoverishes our world.

James F. Jones, Jr.,
Associate Professor of French
Washington University

New Views on the Use of Drama and Dramatic Technique in the Teaching of Foreign Languages and Literatures

by Dennis Paul Seniff

The papers and discussion presented here constitute the proceedings of a Special Session held at the 1979 Modern Language Association Convention in San Francisco, California. This conference, well received by both audience and critics alike,[1] addressed itself to the very real problem of *how* to generate enthusiasm in the foreign language classroom. It focused on ways of truly motivating students to study languages, lest they continue to abandon the activity after one term--or, in some extreme cases, after a few days.

In the *Report* of the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies, much emphasis is placed on pedagogical experimentation (pp. 39-41). To this end, the following proceedings and papers embrace *drama* in all of its manifestations as an extremely effective vehicle for the acquisition and/or improvement of language learning skills. The social, cultural and literary benefits accruing to departments offering foreign language theatre are also examined.

As organizer and moderator of the Session, it gives me great pleasure to diffuse the views and enthusiasm of the panelists and those present to the greater forum that *The Ram's Horn* commands.

*
* *

What are the current trends in the use of drama and dramatic technique at various levels of instruction in foreign languages and literatures? What is going on in many

beginning undergraduate classes? There are even sophisticated dramatic productions accomplished at the senior or graduate levels. Although the majority of the following papers emphasize the Spanish experience, it should be made clear that the general principles involved are universal in their application. Our distinguished panelists, in order of presentation, are Professors John A. Rassias, the foremost innovator in foreign language pedagogy today and a member of President Carter's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies; John Dowling, an internationally acclaimed scholar of Spanish Golden Age literature who has also published extensively in 18th century drama; Farris F. Anderson, a well-known director of Spanish plays; and Malcolm Compitello, who has directed several plays in Spanish, developed classroom curricula involving the use of theater and published extensively in the area of Spanish post-Civil War literature.

By way of summarizing the rationale for this session in the area of language instruction per se, it will suffice to observe that the history of the aural/oral method of teaching from the exigent days of the Army Specialized Training Program during World War II, to the recent highly successful Dartmouth Intensive Language Model perfected by John Rassias clearly indicates that total immersion in the target language is a superior pedagogical approach. Dramatic expression in the classroom has improved students' diction, pronunciation and confidence in the use of the foreign language. The marriage of aural/oral technique and drama, in a word, adds the dimension of imagination to the learning process. In fact, this pedagogical eclecticism has been proven very successful.

At the more sophisticated level of the teaching of drama as a literary genre, the greater (and lesser) works can never be more greatly appreciated than through the individual student's direct participation in the mimetic experience as actor or actress. With these points in mind, today's

session will address itself to the issues 1) that the teaching of foreign languages has not been explored systematically with respect to this particular pedagogical method, and 2) that there is considerable need for the improvement of teaching techniques in many educational institutions and at the different levels of instruction. In responding to these issues, the panelists will provide insight into the use of drama as they believe it should be employed in the classroom and, through their discussion, establish new directions for this most effective approach to the teaching of language and literature.

--Dennis Paul Seniff
Asst. Professor of Spanish
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI 48824

NOTES

1. Beverly T. Watkins, "Will Using Drama to Teach Languages Lure More Students to the Classroom?" The Chronicle of Higher Education (January 7, 1980), p. 3; Fred M. Hechinger, "Dramatic Approach of Professor Brings Languages to Life," The New York Times (Tuesday, January 22, 1980), p. C4. The original title of the session was "New Information on the Use of Drama and Dramatic Techniques in the Teaching of Undergraduate Foreign Language Courses."

All the Class is a Stage

by John A. Rassias

This opportunity to complete part of the discussion held yesterday[1] will allow me to convey to you the urgent issues raised this past year by the President's Commission, and what we teachers can do about them in our classroom. The theme of this session is drama and dramatic techniques that may be used in the classroom. In the Commission's Report, page 41, under the category "Pedagogical Experimentation," the Commission urges innovation in teaching. During discussions of the Report, we have said that one of the most persistent student complaints is dull, uninspired, bored, boring and uncommitted teachers--resulting in empty classes. One of the responses to this situation is to infuse the foreign-language classroom with dramatic techniques.

I take the word drama literally: it means action, and I would like to speak of drama as compared to theater; my colleagues on the panel will very expertly discuss theater in a more historical sense. But let us dwell for a moment on the notion of drama, action and involvement. It does not mean that one has to walk into the classroom fully costumed, with or without makeup. It does not mean that one mounts a seven-ring circus, or stages a multi-media quadraphonic stereo presentation and the like. In my definition of the word, it means very simply that the teacher must enter the classroom and be completely animated, totally given to his or her subject, with a complete conviction that what is going to happen is going to make a difference in the lives of those students for that hour. But not only for that one isolated hour, but also in the continuing sequence. And when that happens people are turned on. Attitudes change. There is action.

Now, there is an important analogy between teaching and acting. This can best be made by the argument put forth by Camus' Caligula. I read Camus' emperor as a superior individual who has to put up with the Patricians, who represent mediocrity. Caligula, in trying to awaken these people, assumes the persona of Venus, the most fickle of the goddesses. Having dressed up with lip rouge and a grotesque costume, and parodying the Lord's Prayer, he tries his best to humiliate the Patricians. Finally, in disgust, he dismisses them. Alone in his room, weary at what he had tried desperately to do, he sees Scipio come to him, perhaps the only man who understands him. He turns and says: "The reason I assumed the stupid and incomprehensible face of the gods is because these men do not understand Destiny, and that is why I made myself Destiny."

To this, you will remember that Scipio says: "Sire, that is what we call blasphemy."

To which Caligula, in fatigue, responds: "No, Scipio, it is instead dramatic art. And the error, the error of all these men consists in not believing enough in the theater."

Notice that the analogy could be developed more extensively if we substituted the word "theater" for "classroom." The error of all these men--the Patricians--is that they do not believe enough in the classroom; and if we can see who these people are, the ones to whom he is speaking, those Patricians may very well be compared to many of the tenuring committees who represent security and who do not want academics to do insane things, who almost willfully tell us "do not teach that way because you make it hard for the rest of us." And Caligula seems to be addressing us all with that statement.

To use the classroom as a theater, one has to be dramatic. Drama does not mean the costume, it does not mean the memorization of the text in the classroom. It could mean that,

but not that alone. To be dramatic in the classroom, one has to overcome many taboos. For example, what is it that prevents one from being alive, from being completely animated? We, as a profession, have a knack for reducing to paltry ashes the immortal flame of our substance, be it language or literature. Endemic to our system is the neat principle that it suffices to know the subject, and to hell with delivery. And this is perhaps part of what graduate school does to us. As many of you, I have fallen hopelessly asleep in the lectures that send us into that "vale of tears", or that confront us with someone who conveys his or her subject matter--without the slightest sense of drama.

There is another taboo, perhaps the one that Caligula had in mind. It is the one that tells us we should not be alive in the classroom; that we should be properly professorial; that we should, in a word, be dead, because there is the fear that we are being judged by our peers and our superiors. People are afraid to be innovative in the classroom, a statement that I have heard from many throughout the country who would love to do different things. The answer to that, of course, is that perhaps we should all be fired, and a new system started. But we should shake up our peers, we should shake up our superiors. Let us never lose sight of the most important reason for entering this profession--to teach, to relate to students. If these taboos continue to dominate our profession it will spell doom for effective teaching.

Please think also of the people who come into our profession and the continued analogy to teaching. What does it matter, for instance, if I, as an actor, swallow half my words? What does it matter if my voice grates like some rusty gate? "What does it matter?," as Taïrov put it, "if my gestures are as uncertain as a horse's hooves galloping wildly in a meadow at midnight?" What does it matter if I don't have the slightest training in the techniques of drama?

Similarly, people look upon the teaching profession and say: "Oh, it is easy to teach. What a soft life! Summer vacations, a little paperwork here and there; I'll bet there are no real problems." And what does it matter, indeed, if one does not have the slightest training in the techniques of teaching or in the art of teaching? These are some of the reasons why we do have some difficulties in our profession, because everyone thinks that anyone can do it. And when we hire people, what do we do? We give them a book and say "Go forth and teach." And what happens is the exact opposite. People are properly insulted, and very, very properly empty our classrooms.

When we think of the problems that face us every day in teaching, I would suggest that many of them could be overcome by a commitment to drama. Drama is really action. Drama is animation. Drama is commitment. Drama is sincerity. But we give the notion to our students that languages are very difficult. Many of them have had horrible experiences in high school. We have heard this throughout the country. Such comments indicate that high schools tend to turn people off, and that colleges complete the job. Students receive the impression that language study is very demanding or dull, that there is no real fun, that it is all really absurd.

As Dr. Grantly Read was making his rounds through the slums of London, he passed by an apartment where the door was half open. Behind that door he heard a groan. On investigating, he found a woman clearly in labor. Read asked her "My dear, does it hurt?" And she, with a beautiful Cockney accent, responded, "No doctor, is it supposed to?" That woman completely altered Read's career: he became the leading advocate of natural childbirth. In class, unfortunately, we give the students the impression that language learning "has to hurt." But it shouldn't hurt! It is as productive as childbirth, and it could be ultimately as much fun!

One or two further points. When we interviewed students not only in this country but throughout the world we heard many arguments. I hope one day the criteria for promotion will be similar to the answers gleaned from students. The first enquiry that we make is "What do you see in a good teacher?" The answer is "Enthusiasm for the subject." Enthusiasm, you will remember, from the Greek means "God in us." This is what students want: a commitment to the subject, a sincere devotion. Everything that I, as a teacher, am doing is of absolute urgency and value; everything else is an impertinent intrusion, and I will do my best to keep it out because I want to relate, not only to the one student in the class, but to every student from 20 to 80 to 100. That is my job, and I can do it if I am dramatic--if I am enthusiastic.

The second criterion for good teaching, according to those queried all over the world, regardless of background, is that they want a teacher who has an identifiable personality and who is consistent; who is the same person inside and outside the classroom. My belief is that if I am preaching humanity, then I ought to demonstrate humanity; if people have a problem, then I will discuss it with them. And this is what people are seeking in their teachers: they are demanding "Please be this, please be that."

Thirdly, they say that they want us, the teachers, to have respect for them as individuals. By respect they do not mean referring to them as "Mister," "Ms," "Miss," or "Mrs.," but rather that we recognize them as living individuals and that we relate to them. As a digression, recall that when Mother Theresa won the Nobel Prize, she gave us a rule for sound teaching, for contact with people, for reaching and touching. She said, "How can anyone be indifferent? If I touch you, I am going to reach you. Whether you like me or not, I am making the effort to touch you, to show that I really want to connect with you." These are the criteria for good teaching.

In my own view, there are some five steps that enhance our dramatic sensibility.

The first of these is a complete self-analysis of who we are--those positive things that have happened to us, and those negative experiences that have turned us off as students. Why do we continue to recycle mediocrity if we know that teachers have turned us off consistently because they are dull, boring, uninspired, not animated in the least bit and certainly unconcerned with their subject? A self-analysis will not only reveal such things from one's past that are negative and undesirable, but will also exalt those positive reminiscences that make the difference between good and bad teaching.

The second step is to develop a "through-line." That is, just as an actor studies the script, the characters, thoroughly--and knows them, and how every element of them pertains to the main thesis of that play--so should we in teaching language or literature be able to study that script to know it thoroughly, and how everything pertains to every other point. The instructor's ability to interrelate material will open the student's mind to an infinite number of possibilities for a greater appreciation of it.

A teacher must work on "cues," or that planned spontaneity that makes it all work more smoothly; it is the ability to animate parts of our delivery.

The development of the art of stage presence has nothing to do with us as individuals, but everything to do with our ability to relate to individuals in the classroom. Fifth, the creative process is where it all comes together in explosive relevance. In developing these five areas, we are in effect saying to our students that we are professionals; that we possess imagination; that we know how to bring a subject to life.

One of the objections to bringing theater or drama to the classroom, and I am certain my colleagues on the panel have all faced this to one degree or another, is that some will call it nonintellectual; as not the function of cerebration, as though cerebration were the only reason for teaching; and that we all play intellectual games with each other. I, for one, am sick of games; I prefer to get to the students with the subject in the most effective possible way. I have found, in my own experience, that the only way to be successful is by going through the student's emotions; I infinitely prefer the thought that comes from the emotions rather than the emotion that comes from the thought. The fastest way to forget something is to reverse that process.

The use of dramatic technique does not exclude intellectualization. It does not exclude cerebration; on the contrary, it gives it a platform to be effective. I have found that if I can seize the emotions first and then the thought, the students will remember what it is I have to say. This is also one of the functions of the theater, and this is, again, what we claim for the classroom. So if we are enthusiastic, if we are consistent and identifiable both inside and outside the classroom--if, indeed, we have genuine respect for our students--then creativity will blossom. As with the theater, no matter how great the art, it will not work unless it is shared. Whatever devices we bring in, it is ultimately not our stage presence that counts, but rather that of our students on the stage of immediate action and immediate involvement.

One further word on the "creative state." In literature, there are thousands of ways of approaching it; my colleagues on the panel will give you some. In the language classroom, there are equally thousands of ways of doing it. But what is this creative state? In a word, it is that thrilling, exhilerating moment when the door is closed behind us and we are alone with our students. I am primed

as high as I could be. I know that every person in that class has something to give me and I think I have something to give each of them. I know that I am ready to begin, just as the actor is ready when the three knocks announce the raising of the curtain. And then it happens! Interaction begins: I am firing away at all levels, I am wide awake and alert. And all, all that I have to say, all that I have to do, is leading to one thing: the subject matter as it involves that student, and how I present it to that individual.

If we are teaching language, we must teach it in its full glory, in its complete cultural framework, which should include any and all experessions of human warmth acceptable to that culture. For example, bear-hugs and wet kisses should be very much part of a modern Greek class that teaches greetings between two friends. Such gestures would be dramatic as they are locked into the Greek cultural framework (a point that illustrates the need for a developed "through-line" in teaching). How can I teach Greek without giving them the flavor of that heavy garlic smell, that indigestible coffee, that expansive joviality, unless I bring it all into the classroom. Every minute thus has a shining impact so that these youngsters begin to say "My God, I am learning more than just language; I am learning a lifestyle."

This is what the President's Commission means when it says that we have to teach our students through a humanistic approach to appreciate the similarities among peoples, and lead our children to respect the differences among peoples. This is starkly urgent. National security is at stake. Our own survival depends on it. We are not going to make it unless we change. We have just finished the 70s, the famous "Me" decade. We're now about to open up what I hope will be a "Do" decade, or a "You" decade--something that will lead people to share with others. The language classroom and the literature classroom are perhaps the two most effective

arenas to accomplish this, to win that battle--the battle for survival.

To conclude, I would like to share with you a short example of the creative state. On the first day of class the students come in and I say the following: "You have to realize that language is communication, both its means and its vehicle. Beneath languages is sensitivity--la sensibilité--and I should like to demonstrate to you the definition of la sensibilité. I will give you not my own definition but the one advanced by Diderot in the eighteenth century." I state that for Diderot la sensibilité was quite simply this:

"Qu'est-ce que c'est que?" (I make a ? sign in the air.)

"Qu'est-ce que c'est la sensibilité?" (I make a ? sign in the air.)

"Qu'est-ce que?" (I make a ? sign in the air.)

They get the idea that that is a question. I follow with "La sensibilité est cette disposition des organes, compagne de la faiblesse des émotions, suite de la mobilité du diaphragme, de la vivacité de l'imagination, de la délicatesse des nerfs." Comes the moment for action-for drama--as I impress the notions--

"à crier" (Dramatize shout)

"à pleurer" (Dramatize cry)

"à rire" (Dramatize laugh)

"à admirer" (Dramatize admiration)

"à chanter" (Dramatize sing)

"à danser" (Dramatize dance)

I keep adding to this list (and acting out each) until as many verbs as possible are covered.

Then, to conclude, I add and dramatize:

"à avoir peur"

"à être injuste"

"à perdre la raison"

"à n'avoir aucune idée du beau, du bon, du vrai"

"à être fou"

Finally, I add "à être humain"--to be human--and give then the demonstration of strengths and weaknesses which we all share. These things are thus all brought to their attention vividly.

*
* *

As a result of the actions of this past year with the President's Commission, I believe in completing our mission. I propose to blaze up and down this country to assist whoever is willing to enter this new decade with drama and action. This will give our students a different perspective, a new awareness, and what we all need ultimately to save ourselves: another voice. I thank you very much for listening.

--John A. Rassias
Kenan Professor of Romance Languages
Dept. of French and Italian
Dartmouth College
Hanover, NH 03755

NOTE

1. "Foreign Languages in the 1980's: The Report of the President's Commission," Session #378 of the 94th Annual Convention of the Modern Language Association, San Francisco, 29 December 1979. Program arranged by the Association of Departments of Foreign Languages. Other speakers in this session were Congressman Leon Panetta (Democrat-California) and Robert E. Ward, Stanford University.

The Oral Interpretation of Literature in the Spanish Language Classroom

by John Dowling

In Recuerdos del tiempo viejo Jose Zorrilla tells how he composed his one-act play El Puñal del godo for an all-male cast of four characters: the leading actresses of the theater company for which he wrote were either unsuitable for the female roles he imagined or were not available at the time of the performance.[1] The play became popular in boys' schools all over the Hispanic world, and for the rest of his life Zorrilla was to meet--in cities and towns in Spain, in Mexico, and in the Antilles--men who as boys at school had played the roles of the hermit monk Romano, the Gothic noble Theudia, King Don Rodrigo, or Count Don Julian.

Amateur theatricals have been a part of the educational scene at least since the Jesuits introduced closet drama into their first schools in the days of their founder St. Ignatius. Three centuries later Zorrilla himself as a youth took part in plays at the Jesuit Seminario de Nobles in Madrid. In our own day, "little theater"--whether within the university as in this country or in the shadow of the university as in the Hispanic world--has become big theater.

Language teachers have recognized the usefulness of both drama and theater. Teachers of literature have ignored at their peril the importance of the oral interpretation of literature, especially of the genres of drama and poetry. Leaving aside poetry for the present, I want to address two aspects of the question: the use of drama as an aid to oral expression and the use of oral interpretation as a help in understanding dramatic literature. The producer of the

North Carolina Shakespeare Festival, Mark Woods, has been quoted as saying, "Plays are written to be seen and heard, not read" (Southern Living, July, 1979, p. 13). A professor of mine once informed his class that Shakespeare, nowadays, is meant to be read and not seen. My experience belies both points of view just as it runs counter to another aphorism: "One picture is worth a thousand words." To these statements we must answer that one approach does not exclude another.

Let me turn first to the use that the language teacher can make of drama to teach the language. The dialogue was a key device long before it became central to the oral-aural methods of recent years. Erasmus wrote his Familiar Colloquies for the purpose of teaching young European humanists to speak the Latin language which was their lingua franca. He spiced the "model dialogues" with anti-clericalism and devoted a series of conversations to the subject of love and marriage so to appeal to the concerns of young men. Language teachers have followed in the path of Erasmus through the centuries. We have not possessed his genius, and we have been teased by our colleagues and our students for composing dialogues they doubt will ever take place on such subjects as "la pluma de mi tía" or "la vache de ma grand'mère."

Yet we need not apologize for all our efforts. Some textbooks have become classics in their genre. Let me tell you of my use of one. When television first came to Lubbock, Texas, and before cable, there was time available for locally produced shows on commercial stations. Of the time allotted to the University, the Spanish department was given fifteen minutes once a week but with no long-range commitment. I had to rule out a structured teaching series. In a community where most people had had at least a minimal experience with Spanish, I decided to call my program "Brush Up Your Spanish," and indeed it was introduced with a brush painting the title. With the permission

of D.C. Heath, I used the text by Charles E. Kany, Spoken Spanish for Travelers and Students. You may recall that Kany's dialogues are not Erasmian and indeed resemble those that commonly appear in language texts, but there is in most of them a clever touch, especially at the end. They have a comic denouement. I used my college students as actors. We had simple costumes, when required, and the suggestion of a set. In our format, the students presented the skit, a performance that lasted barely a minute. I then "taught" the dialogue to the unseen viewers encouraging them to mimic in the manner familiar to language teachers. Subtitles interpreted the text. To close the fifteen-minute space, the student actors re-enacted the skit.

At the time, my program was the only Spanish-language program in an area with a large population of native speakers of Spanish, and for that reason it turned out to be more popular with them than with the English-language public to which it was primarily aimed. When I visited the Mexican restaurants or the Spanish-language movie theaters along East Broadway in Lubbock, I briefly experienced the flattering delights of public adulation. However, the people who really profited from the experience were my student actors who memorized and performed the dialogues with gesture and intonation intended to enhance the reality. Their testimonies at the time and years later have re-enforced my conviction that dialogue spoken with expression and combined with action greatly enrich and strengthen language learning.

Those of us who have acted in plays, whether the simple New Mexican Christmas scenes of Las Posadas or a full blown production of Don Juan Tenorio, are well aware that snatches of dialogue and turns of expression linger on in the memory for years. Romance grammar--the agreements of subject and verb, of noun and adjective; the placement of object pronouns--becomes ingrained in the non-native speak-

er. There is another significant advantage that we may not have recognized. The dialogue in a play has a wider emotional range than normal pedagogic dialogue. Classroom conversation, which has almost no emotional range, is antiseptic. Model dialogues of text books have slightly more, but the lack of literary quality discourages the student from entering into the roles of the speakers. The play, however, has the potential of taking students outside themselves, enabling them to speak as they may someday wish to speak when they find themsevles committed--*comprometidos*, *engagés*--in a real situation: surprised, angry, excited, afraid, delighted; laughing or crying; making a public address or whispering words of love. Hence, in their search for emotional range, language teachers have turned to plays for the touch of genius that was lacking in dialogues of their own creation.

An early example of a play used as a conversation text was Leandro Fernández de Moratín's *La Comedia nueva* (1792). Before this there were scarcely any Spanish plays at all written in prose except for *La Celestina* and the farces of Lope de Rueda and Cervantes. The language of Jovellanos' *El Delincuente honrado* (1773) was too stilted to serve as a model for conversation; but the prose of *La Comedia nueva* and later of *El Sí de las niñas* (1806) has served generations of playwrights as a model for dramatic dialogue. It has also served students of the Spanish language. A Spaniard resident in Germany, Manuel Ramajo, recognized its usefulness and published a bilingual edition in 1800.[2] It is not called a conversation text, but the arrangement of the pages points to the intent: the Spanish is on the left and the German is on the right. Three years later, in 1803, a language teacher in France, a certain S. Baldwin, also printed *La Comedia nueva* in a text entitled *Les Eléments de la conversation espagnole et française*, ou dia-

alogues espagnols et français....[3] Baldwin supplemented his dialogues with the complete text of La Comedia nueva with the Spanish and the French in parallel columns of each page.

American language teachers followed the lead of their continental colleagues. During the early part of this century, generations of students learned the language of Moratín from several school editions of El Sí de las niñas; and anyone who compares the language of Madrid today with that of El Sí will testify to their good judgment.

The use of plays in class, whether as models for dialogues or as works of literature, has led both students and teachers to want to produce them on a stage. We have some splendid examples in American academia. At the University of Wisconsin, Roberto Sánchez has staged an annual play for more than a quarter of a century. At North Carolina, Professor and Mrs. A.V. Ebersole have specialized in the production of Golden Age comedias. At the University of Washington, Farris Anderson developed a Spanish theater program of high quality. At Michigan State University, Malcolm Compitello has recently presented Spanish theater within the curricular framework. These full-fledged efforts win my admiration. I have felt, however, that I must be content with something less, because I do not have the talents of a director. My approach is one which, I suspect, is used in part by most of us. I am trying here to systematize it.

About the time that I began full-time university teaching, I saw the Drama Quartette's production of Don Juan in Hell, a part of G.B. Shaw's Man and Superman, performed by a cast featuring Charles Boyer and Agnes Moorehead. It was done as if it were a play reading, but later I realized that there was more art than I supposed in their apparently effortless version. Still, it gave me the idea that in the classroom I could persuade students to attempt somewhat

more elaborate play readings. The rules of the game are simple. In advance, I supply the class with a list of the scenes to be read aloud, and I assign the parts. I do not attempt a whole play, and I adjust the number of parts to the students I have. I try to leave some students to be the audience with me; they will take part in the next "performance." I provide a sketch of blocks representing chairs arranged in a semi-circle before an audience in such a way that the actors are not obliged to move about the "stage" a great deal. Each character is assigned a chair. The rule is that when a character is on stage, he stands; when he is off stage, he sits. If the dialogue requires sitting, another chair may be used in front of the semi-circle; but I use as little furniture as possible--mostly because classrooms do not have much that is usable. I do encourage the actors to employ their ingenuity in providing simple properties (a cane, a letter, a book, money, newspapers, etc.). I avoid swords or a loaded pistol, suggesting the imagination or a pointed finger instead. I ask the actors to attempt simple sound effects. If music is called for in the text and available, I furnish it. For example, in Buero Vallejo's La Doble historia del Doctor Valmy, the author calls for a "'Twist' trepidante en el piano," for Chopin's Nocturne in E Flat, and for Brahms Lullaby, and I play recordings of these compositions. I believe that attention to this element of drama enhances students' perceptions of the literary text.

I must be mindful that the "actors" have to hold the text of the play in one hand, but I encourage them to acquaint themselves with the text sufficiently well so that their eyes are not glued to the page. I insist that they stand erect on two feet and that they speak out loud and clear. To the extent that their inhibitions permit, I ask that their voices give expression to the meaning of the dialogue. In evaluating this assignment, I weigh this aspect of the student's work most.

The results are predictably varied. Group shouting comes easiest: "Entrad, cercad la case." "¡Muera, muera!" (That is from Los Amantes de Teruel, Act IV, scenes viii and ix). Expressions of tenderness and sobbing come harder. However, in our classes, we do have students who try out for parts in plays, who take part in little theater activities, and who enjoy participating in informal play reading in English. These students, when present, do much to release the inhibitions of the timid. I find that in a class with a good esprit de corps most students will, by the end of a term, have made a serious effort to expand the range of their emotional expression in Spanish. Since I am not concerned with the critical reception of our production, I can well afford to let the untalented have their chance at playing the lead, and I try to make sure--unless the student begs otherwise--to let everyone be hero or heroine once during the term. Sometimes they rise to the occasion; at the least, they will have attempted to express themselves with feeling in the Spanish language. I once had an especially satisfying experience with a blind student. He transcribed his parts into Braille and then read from the Braille text in performance. Another class had an unusual number of high-spirited young women in it, and the classroom had a small stage with a curtain. When we read Miguel Mihura's Maribel y la extraña familia, my actresses planned a surprise for me. At eight o'clock in the morning they appeared on stage with costumes and makeup as they represented Maribel's painted friends from the bars and cafés of Madrid.

This is unusual. What one should expect is a performance that resembles play tryouts by mostly untalented undergraduates. In a quarter or a semester, however, a certain unbending takes place. Nowadays, we have a number of recordings of plays that we read in language or literature courses. When students are assigned to imitate the expression of the actors, even the more inhibited show an improved range of oral expression. I have also found it

helpful, for example, to play recordings of Verdi's La Forza del destino and Il Trovatore with the dramas by the Duque de Rivas and García Gutiérrez. It has seemed to me that when the class heard the music the day before, they lost some of their inhibitions during the oral reading.

Occasionally, a special confluence of talent enables one to do something out of the ordinary. In a National Endowment for the Humanities Seminar for College Teachers, I had a young but experienced drama director, several amateur actors and directors, as well as several native speakers. The entire group of twelve planned and performed a reading, radio-style, of Ramón de la Cruz's La Presumida burlada. In the meantime, I had persuaded an amateur artist to do sketches of scenes from the sainete which the local Instructional Resources Center put onto slides. The actors recorded the dialogue on tape with music and sound effects. As a result, for some effort but with little cost, the participants have a thorough concept of what a sainete is in performance, and they also have a tape and slide show that they can use in their own classes.

At the beginning I suggested that gains are accrued not only in oral expression but also in literary appreciation. The study of drama requires, I believe, more exercise of the imagination than does the study of fiction. It requires especially visual imagination and even kinetic empathy. Reading aloud and partly acting out selected passages helps students imagine how that particular play would be in performance, and it trains them how to read other plays. I believe it makes them more sensitive to the language of the play. This is especially important for the Spanish theater. Drama in verse persisted in Spain until the end of the 19th century and survived into the twentieth. García Lorca was one of the few dramatists in the world who achieved a truly poetic theater--even when it was written in prose--during our modern period.

*
* *

My experience is that both students and professors greatly enrich language learning by using oral readings, partly dramatized, from selected plays to broaden the range of oral expression. Language teachers have long practiced this particular approach, and my aim has been to systematize a familiar practice. I also want to encourage play reading and the oral interpretation of literature as an experience that heightens the pleasure to be gained from reading dramatic texts.

--John Dowling
Professor of Spanish and
Dean, Graduate School
Dept. of Romance Languages
University of Georgia
Athens, GA 30601

NOTES

1. José Zorrilla, Recuerdos del tiempo viejo (Madrid: Tipografía Gutenberg, 1882), I, 91-94.

2. The book has two title pages, and the translator used an anagram of his name: La Comedia nueva, o El Café. Comedia en dos actos por Don Leandro Fernández de Moratín traducida al alemán por Manuel Ojamar (Dresde: Henríquez Gerlach, 1800): oder: Das Kaffeehaus. Ein Schauspiel in zwei Aufzugen. Aus dem Spanischen des Leandro Fernández von Moratín übersetzt von Manuel Ojamar (Dresden: Heinrich Gerlach, 1800), 151 pp., errata.

3. S. Baldwin , Les Élémens de la conversation espagnole et française, ou Dialogues espagnols et français à l'usage des deux nations. Ouvrage auquel on a joint la Nouvelle Comédie ou le Café, comédie en deux actes en prose, en espagnol et en français. Par l'auteur de L'Art de la correspondance espagnole et française, ou Recueil de lettres en espagnol et en français à l'usage des deux nations (Paris: Théophile Barrois Fils, 1803), 191 pp., table.

Spanish Theatre at the University of Washington

by Farris F. Anderson

Even though I have, for twelve years, directed an active Spanish theatre program at the University of Washington, my primary concern has never been the use of drama to teach a foreign language. Improved language proficiency for some has been a by-product of our theatre productions, but it has been incidental to our broader aims. I would like to discuss those aims, as well as our practical experiences in attempting to carry them out at the University of Washington. It is my assumption that our experiences are, to some extent, representative of foreign-language theatre in American universities.

When I joined the faculty at the University of Washington in 1967, the administration at Washington assured me the financial and other resources I would require in order to initiate a program of theatre productions in Spanish. The Spanish faculty was rebuilding; new personnel and instructional innovations were welcomed. The student population was emerging from obscurity to seek expressions of its culture within the North American context and Seattle was entering a period of rapid growth and expansion in the performing arts.

In short, the prospects of success for an educational theatre program appeared excellent, and we launched our program in the fall with optimism and enthusiasm. Our first production, in winter 1968, was Valle-Inclán's Los Cuernos de Don Friolera. In following years the program was to generate productions of Lorca's La Zapatera prodigiosa, Cervantes' entremeses, Jardial Poncela's Una noche de primavera sin sueño, Lope de Rueda's Las Aceitunas, Arrabal's El Cementerio de automóviles, Tamayo y Baus' Un drama nuevo, Lorca's La Casa de Bernarda Alba,

Benavente's Los Intereses creados, Mihura's Tres sombreros de copa, Lorca's El Retablillo de Don Cristóbal and Don Perlimplín.

Our first production bore the strains that typically afflict any new, complex operation. A fundamental problem was novelty. There was no tradition of Spanish theatre at Washington, and many found the project exotic and eccentric. Much of my time was consumed by the elemental task of explaining the project to students, colleagues and administrators. Another difficulty was the extra-curricular nature of the production. No one was receiving academic credit for theater work; participants were consequently obliged to meet the enormous demands of the production without a compensatory reduction in their normal responsibilities as students and teachers. There were also predictable administrative and organizational problems; since our operation had not yet been incorporated as a formal course, I had no established structure to aid in the recruitment of cast and crew, acquisition of materials and general coordination of the production.

On the other hand, there were certain problems which we did not have in our first production--a source of some nostalgia for me today. We did not have to worry about finding a theatre in which to perform, because the Drama School readily placed one of the campus theatres at our disposal. We had only minimal concern with costumes and sets, because the Drama School allowed us to use materials from its stock. And we did not have to concern ourselves with finances; Romance Languages paid all production costs, and we consequently had no need to charge admission.

The quality of this first production (Don Friolera) was a reflection of the attendant conditions. It was a good, adequate amateur production, compensating in enthusiasm for what it lacked in polish. Whatever its artistic imperfections, it laid a certain groundwork that would im-

measurably benefit future productions. We played to delighted full houses on all three nights, establishing conclusively that there was an audience for Spanish-language theatre in Seattle. Most importantly, it dispelled the aura of eccentricity that had surrounded the whole notion of a Spanish theatre program. Spanish theatre had been established as feasible and exciting, and when Don Friolera closed it left among students, faculty and community an eager anticipation of our next production.

For our second show, Lorca's La Zapatera prodigiosa, the benefits of Don Friolera's precedent were complemented by the formal incorporation of the production into the Spanish curriculum. Production and performances became part of a new course: "Spanish Drama and Play Production." The course was given a 400 number and was thus open to both graduate and undergraduate students. It was now possible for students to receive up to six quarter-credits for their participation, and thus to include that participation as a part of their course load. As in Don Friolera, non-students were also invited to work with the play; however, priority for cast and crew positions was given to enrolled students. It was also now possible for me, as director, to include the production as a part of my teaching load. In addition to reducing the drain on participants' time and energy, the formalization of the production course permitted a more thorough approach to the task at hand. Since the production was to take place over the course of an entire quarter, there was time for extensive analysis of the play and for theoretical treatment of the rudiments of theatrical production. Students acquired a broader perspective on the activity in which they were engaging and a more analytical familiarity with the play they were to bring to life on the stage. The educational value of the operation was thus significantly heightened. From the director's point of view, the more structured format brought organizational benefits. The result of this new structure, combined with the benefits

accrued from our first year's experience, was a final product of much higher quality than in 1968. With Zapatera we produced theatre that was good by any standard and established a norm of quality that would govern future productions.

The years 1969 and 1970 brought turbulence and change to higher education throughout the United States, and our modest theatre program felt their effects. The interrelated tremors that shook the nation's educational institutions--Vietnam, the civil rights movement, demographic trends, and economic downturn--threatened the very survival of our program, which was only beginning to reach stability and maturity. Reacting to budgetary pressures and internal politics, the Drama School abruptly abandoned its cooperative policies of the past and refused us the use of a theatre and production materials. The Romance Languages department cut its financial support by 60%, at a time when our production costs were rising sharply.

The program had lost its physical and financial base. However, it still had its human resources, and this was to be the force that would save it. With the support of dedicated students and colleagues, I made the decision to attempt to save the program by moving it toward a radical new independence. An inconvenient but available off-campus theatre was rented in March, 1970. A hired designer oversaw the construction of sets. Costumes were made, bought and borrowed. To meet the program's new financial obligations--such as the major expense of renting a theater--we reluctantly instituted a modest admission charge. Our new and more complicated financial structure introduced the bothersome task of handling large amounts of money and demanded more sophisticated bookkeeping. On top of all these operational adjustments, and on top of the strains that are a part of any theatrical production, we had to cope with the hostilities and suspicions which, in 1969-70,destabilized academic operations across the Unit-

ed States.

Our 1970 production of Cervantes' entremeses was not the best show we have ever done, but it was not the worst, either. The quality of the performances was better than expected, given the adverse conditions. Operationally, the production was clearly a success: we increased the number of performances to five, played to capacity audiences, acquired a stock of costumes and sets and made a profit of $70.49. The many problems we had been forced to face and overcome had proven to be a blessing in disguise. They had obliged us to become independent and to operate with a minimum of institutional support; they had pushed us toward the procedures and philosophy that would inform the program's operation in years to come.

After the Cervantes production (i.e., after three productions and two and a half years of existence), the Spanish theatre program had defined its basic direction. Today our more ambitious and higher quality program continues to operate independently, with no financial support of any kind, the department's lingering token support having evaporated entirely after 1970. Each production offers a minimum of five performances and plays to well over one thousand spectators. We have taken some of our shows on the road to towns in Washington and Oregon, and one has been videotaped and shown on educational television in Seattle.

These indications of stability, and of popular and artistic success, would seem to imply, as a logical corollary, the total stability of the program today. I wish I could report that this were the case. But despite its attainments and its proven appeal to participants and public, Washington's Spanish theatre program continues to struggle and falter, and its continued existence is by no means assured. After a dozen years I observe that while the problems we encountered in our first production no

longer exist, the things I took for granted in 1968 are today major problems that threaten the very survival of the program. I do not believe my chagrin to be petulant or provincial. Of course, our Spanish theatre program is not obsolete either, and its difficulties have more to do with institutional myopia than with institutional evolution. The most crucial unmet need is a physical facility: a theatre in which to perform, with both shop and storage space. Underlying this problem is a more sinister and more pervasive circumstance: lack of support from either the department of Romance Languages or the College of Arts & Sciences. We long ago resigned ourselves to the absence of direct financial support, but we cannot very well resign ourselves to the absence of a theatre for our performances. In recent years it has become practically impossible to find off-campus theatres that are both available and priced within our limited means. Makeshift performances in unsuitable locations diminish our appeal to the public and undermine the value of the experience for the participants. Improper storage of materials, brought on by inadequacy of storage space, is inefficient; it causes loss of time and money. A physical facility is, in short, fundamental to any concept of an effective program. This need could be met, and the program's stability assured, by support from the department and the college. It would not require a major diplomatic or administrative effort to make one of the university's six theatres consistently available for our modest needs.

Two questions then arise: (1) Why doesn't the administration support the Spanish theatre program? (2) Why should it support it? Efforts to answer these questions lead directly to the educational philosophy of the program, and by implication to broad problems of higher education in America today. The reasons for the lack of administration support are more negative than positive. They have to do with inertia rather than with active hostility toward the program. Lack of enthusiasm for an activity that is not a consecrated symbol of academic re-

spectability; a reluctance to tamper with the traditional departmental structure; a simple desire not to be bothered with one more demand on their attention: these are the motives I perceive in the failure of deans and chairmen to assure the survival of our Spanish theatre program.

The reasons why they should support the program are largely the obverse of the reasons why they do not. There are, of course, pragmatic arguments for support. It is in the department's and the college's own interest to help the program survive and prosper. In these lean times for academia, and for foreign languages in particular, must one belabor the advantages of an activity that (a) attracts more students than any other advanced Spanish course; (b) generates a student loyalty unheard-of in any other Spanish course: (c) creates good will and a close bond between student and faculty participants; (d) brings favorable publicity to the university's Spanish program; (e) foments contact with the non-academic community; (f) is self-supporting?

But, ultimately the program's existence must be justified through its educational potential, which is, in my view, enormous. Part of it is social and human in nature. Theatre is a group activity--in production and performance, for participants and spectators. A play is mounted by a group of people who work together intensively and cooperatively in a creative enterprise. Their finished product is viewed collectively by persons who come together in a designated space and willingly participate together in the illusion being offered. All participants accept similar fictions and conventions, emotions and rhythms. These human and social experiences, inherent in the structure of all theatre, become especially productive in the case of foreign-language theatre, because the interaction among individuals is enriched by a cross-cultural perspective.

Such functions are happy by-products of the program's more fundamental educational missions, which are artistic and personal in nature. I take it to be self-evident that the understanding of dramatic art gained through practical work in theatre is vastly superior to any understanding that may be gained from a classroom study of drama as literature. However, I would not wish to become embroiled in the long-standing antagonism between those who approach drama as "literature" and those who approach drama as "theater." Both perspectives are necessary for a deep appreciation of the dramatic art, and it is precisely through cultivation of this dual perspective that a foreign-language theatre program can make a major educational contribution. It can bridge the traditional gap between text and stage, providing students with an exciting opportunity to experience the text and to appreciate the complex assemblage of artistic elements unique to dramatic art. Furthermore, since theatre is by nature an interdisciplinary activity, a foreign-language theatre program can offer relief from the academic provincialism which--in the case of Spanish, at least--too often limits the educational value of traditional programs.

The process of experiencing the dramatic text and bringing it to life on the stage offers the student an important opportunity for personal expansion. This, of course, should be the ultimate objective of all education, and the capacity of theatre to contribute to the personal growth of our students is, for me, the most compelling argument in its favor. I am not speaking now of increased social and cultural awareness, but of something more fundamental: expanded self-knowledge. I am not suggesting that the cure for our ailing educational establishment lies in a massive proliferation of foreign-language theatre programs. But students can experience an important personal development through educational theatre--in which one studies art and the humanities in an active, creative manner not possible in more traditional classes. In this way, learning takes

place through interaction with purely theoretical constructs. The result can be the liberation of dormant forces in the personality. By participating in a dramatic production one helps to organize a work of art, and one becomes a part of that organization. I can think of no more exciting way to cultivate a sense of form, and thereby a sense of self. Every work of art is a metaphor of some human reality, and the nature of theatre allows us to experience the metaphor, to participate actively in its re-creation, and in so doing to assimilate it psychologically. In the case of theatre the broad metaphor in question--aside from the particular qualities of individual plays--is the Theatrum Mundi metaphor. The validity of theatre as an art form and as an educational medium assumes the validity of this metaphor. That is, it assumes that life is in some sense a series of quasi-theatrical exercises, and that theatre is therefore a compact representation of life's structures. At a time when our national and personal realities appear consistently to come to us filtered through Valle-Inclán's funhouse mirror, it would be difficult to argue that a humanistic education should not include a heightened sensitivity to life's theatricality. Educational theatre is in an ideal position to carry out this mission. The tensions between role and identity, posture and authenticity, fantasy and fact, stasis and flow can become internalized structures and keys to personal growth for the student whose education includes work with an intelligently conceived theatre program.

Increased language proficiency has not been the primary objective of the Spanish theatre program at Washington. Our aims are broader and have more to do with the potentialities of theatre itself than with the mastery of another tongue. But we do work within the context of a Spanish program, and our activities are directed at students of Spanish. This fact is what makes the program unusual and, in my view, important. Without falling into

trite arguments of "relevance" one can, I think, defend the proposition that a Spanish theatre program brings the richness of the Hispanic tradition into a dynamic and creative framework, and thereby rescues our students from the parochialism into which they sometimes fall. The potential is today greater and more urgent than ever. And yet the obstacles to such a program's survial grow more formidable with each passing year.

--Farris F. Anderson
Assoc. Professor of Spanish
Dept. of Romance Languages
University of Washington
Seattle, WA 98195

Drama and the Spanish Language Classroom: A Personal Chronicle

by Malcolm Alan Compitello

Past experience as a graduate student convinced me that drama enhances foreign-language instruction. But a more regularized structure would limit the disadvantages caused by any experiment's ad hoc and volunteer/extracurricular nature.

I was given just such an opportunity by my department in the Fall of 1977 to design innovative new language courses in an effort to retain students and attract new ones, and knowing dramatic expression could be a viable alternative to composition or conversation courses, I designed a course called Spanish Dramatic Expression that would incorporate the positive aspects of my past experience.

Such a course would improve linguistic and expressive skills in Spanish through extensive class practice and ultimate presentation of a dramatic work. Those planning a career in teaching would find the confidence gained in such an experience beneficial to their professional training. After facing an audience of several hundred spectators, facing one's first class as a new teacher would be a much less imposing obstacle.

Many students terminate their language studies after the first or second year because traditional upper-level courses hold minimal interest for them. This group could be attracted to a non-traditional course that allowed them to keep up with their Spanish and use it in an enjoyable way. A similar situation existed with the large native Spanish-speaking population in the Lansing and MSU communities. They too might be attracted by the opportunity to use their native language in some dynamic way.

The primary goal for the course was to give the students greater fluency and a more open attitude toward the use of Spanish. I should have realized that this was, in and of itself, a great enough task. However, I was concerned that more traditional colleagues might object to its lack of "content." To "legitimize" the course academically I added some secondary goals. Students would learn to appreciate how a dramatic text operates and the problems involved in staging. Such skills as blocking, acting styles and stage design would therefore be taught. An added goal related to my academic concerns was the attempt to give some type of a working knowledge of the historical development of Hispanic theater to the students.

These goals were to be achieved by using a framework comprised of several segments. During the first week of class, guest lecturers would give short presentations on dramatic theory and periodization. These would be interspersed with dramatic readings to familiarize students with problems of interpretation, stage direction, blocking, etc. After a text for presentation was selected (by the end of the third week of the ten week term) students would become actively involved in the many activities dealing with production, staging and performing a representative Hispanic play. During this "rehearsal" stage of the course, MSU's extensive videotape facilities were used. At least one rehearsal would be taped each week to make student improvement and aid the instructor in directing, by making it easier to point out strengths and weaknesses. To break the tedium and tension of constant rehearsals students were to do some outside reading dealing with the work chosen for production. The result of their investigations was to be presented to the rest of the class in the form of short oral reports. Other outside assignments were to include a blocking or directing project for a short play other than those chosen for production.

Student evaluation was to be based primarily on par-

ticipation in classroom activities and on the final performance. These communal activities were to account for seventy percent of each student's grade. I stressed here that the major contributing factor was a willingness to improve both the interpretation of the role assigned and the use of language, not native linguistic skills or acting ability.

Outside activites and the oral reports would each count for ten percent of the grade, a percentage that I felt represented the relative importance of each activity in relation to the time spent on it during the quarter.

The proposal was accepted and was given as an experimental section of our regular conversation course, a two-credit course meeting three times per week.

During the spring term I did extensive advertising, circulating announcements to all Spanish classes and visiting most of them myself. I recruited personally the best students enrolled in my courses that term, as well as those who had been in previous classes. Recruitment was helped by the fact that during that period I was instrumental in launching an experimental Spanish theater group (Grupo Experimental de Teatro) in the department. The performance of plays by Osvaldo Dragún and Enrique Buenaventura impressed many students enough to want to participate in a similar project.

Thus at the end of the spring I was optimistic that a drama class could improve students' language skills. But I learned that certain external factors had produced an attenuating situation. I was responsible for one of them. My public relations efforts had produced sixteen students--all female--more than expected. Luckily one male student later surfaced, but I was now faced with the task of finding enough short intelligible plays to accommodate seventeen actors with a predominance of female roles, or at least with

enough in which gender was not an important consideration.

There were minor administrative problems. The language lab did indeed have extensive videotape capabilities, but the dean of the college had not honored our request for monies to buy videocassettes, and therefore it was impossible to utilize this important teaching tool which should have been a vital component of the course.

Scheduling also hindered the project. Conversation courses at Michigan State are normally slotted for smaller seminar type rooms with students seated around a big table. As I was technically teaching a conversation course, the scheduling officer assigned me this type of classroom. As normally happens at large universities at peak class hours, there were no other rooms available, and we had to make do with cramped quarters by piling all the chairs and tables against a wall.

Once we began to work in earnest things improved but became hectic, at times chaotic. All plans for academic validity went out the window when my seventeen actors appeared. We had to rehearse multiple plays simultaneously or consecutively in each class session, and no time was left for any of the extra-dramatic activities planned. There was literally no time to do oral reports or to provide much instruction on Hispanic dramatic history or dramatic theory. Thus the entire student grade had to be based on improvement and performance in the final play.

The plays chosen for production were El Delantal blanco by Sergio Vodanovič, being read in the second-year classes that term; Lorca's Retablillo de don Cristóbal; and Lope de Rueda's paso, Las Aceitunas. The advantage of choosing an assigned text that term was a built-in audience. Another advantage was that almost all the male roles could be played by females. The exceptions were the role of Cristóbal in the Lorca piece (which went to my only male student) and the

father in the Lope de Rueda paso (which I played).

Before I cast, we spent four or five class sessions doing dramatic readings. This enabled me to check the oral competence of the students. During these classes I also gave them rudimentary instruction on voice intonation, modulation, as well as how to use dramatic pauses for effect. All of this helped students to get out of the habit of the monotonic use of language that they receive in normal language instruction. More importantly it aided them in making great strides in their loss of inhibitions, a must for changing speakers into actors.

I then cast the three plays. I felt comfortable doing so because these were mostly former students. As expected I found that the language skills of the class ranged from near native to a two-year college level. I cast accordingly (male roles aside), giving the more difficult and longer roles to students with the linguistic capacity and with proven records of promptness. This meant that some students had smaller parts than others, or, from the students' perspective, the course required more work from some members of the class than from others. This was true, but at that time I had not resolved the dilemma, other than to assure them and myself that the constant repetition of scenes in preparation for performance would allow participants to receive at least as much "talking time" as in a normal conversation class. It was however the quality of time that made the most important contribution to the students' linguistic improvement as we entered the rehearsal stage of the course.

The weeks spent on this phase of class activities were at the same time exhilarating and taxing for all involved. The utilization of class periods proved vital. It became apparent that having the entire class there for each period was a waste of time, since the small size of the classroom precluded rehearsing all three plays at once. In the be-

ginning I tried to practice a portion of each play during the period. While one group was rehearsing, another would be working in the hall (much to the chagrin of instructors in contiguous classrooms) or in my office. In addition, I made the best possible time of each minute by using the time between classes to practice with individuals on the delivery of lines, diction, pronunciation or movement. In this way I was able to stretch class time to almost double the regular fifty-minute session. This especially helped with particularly difficult monologues or dialogues that required a lot of personal attention on my part.

Passers-by my office during office hours must have wondered what could have been transpiring as I coached one or more actors in sometimes provocative or violent scenes from the works. Whenever possible, late afternoon or weekend rehearsals were scheduled. Collecting a substantial number of actors at any one time outside of class proved difficult if not impossible, and I had to resign myself to never getting an entire cast together at any time other than during the assigned class period.

The desire to utilize time most effectively was an asset in the long run, for it heightened the quality of that exposure. By devoting so much time to rehearsing individuals, in addition to blocking group action, students were able to repeat and perfect their deliveries. Such aspects as pauses, intonation, inflection, emphasis and repetitive practice received more attention than in any other language course. Not every student taking the course spoke near-native Spanish by the time the play was performed, but all improved their oral Spanish, some dramatically, some in more subtle ways. They began to use gestures called for in certain situations and became much more aware of both their speech patterns and the areas of pronunciation that needed improvement. In addition, the hours spent at home both memorizing their lines and practicing them provided the kind of structure out-of-class ac-

tivity that most foreign-language students do not have. My students had a tangible motivation for using their Spanish at home.

As we entered the final weeks of the quarter, time became even more of a factor. Action was not blocked, and no longer could I afford to do one scene from each play at a class meeting. It was now necessary to devote an entire class to each play individually, to allow time to work on weak points, improve timing, tinker with staging, props, etc. I now began to rotate casts, not requiring that all students be present at each class session. This enabled me to run through each play several times on a given day, and reserve a few spare minutes to have a small group of actors from another group report to work on a particular scene. Such a technique minimized the amount of potential oral practice time students lost by not being present for each class. This was a trade-off: the benefits of more practice time for each student against the division of casts to make sure the plays were presentable.

But I finally hit upon a solution that mitigated the lost class time, improved the quality of the productions noticeably and brought cultural enrichment to some language and literature classes. I sent around a memo to all Spanish language instructors informing them that I would be willing to bring one of the productions to them during their regular class time, and was thus able to make the drama class be in more than one place simultaneously. I was quick to point out that the performances they would see were still in their rehearsal stage and were not yet polished enough to go on stage, but many instructors were eager to bring some diversification to their classrooms. We received many more invitations than we could accept.

The pre-performances greatly aided the actors. They were able to go before a small audience and gain confidence before having to go on stage. By doing the entire production

without pauses for directions, they broke the rehearsal-room syndrome, and were forced to perform under performance-like conditions. This gave them a good sense of what areas needed more work, and what went over well with an audience. They informed me of what suggestions they had, and we all had a better sense of what needed attention. They all began to take their tasks more seriously and became aware of what was at stake if they went on stage unprepared. Their pride made them strive for perfection. I had not demanded perfection because I wanted the class to be a linguistically fruitful experience. Yet the students took the initiative to make sure that all aspects were polished.

While one group was off during a "guest performance," I worked with the others. At the end of the quarter the public performance surpassed my expectations. The productions were well received by an appreciative audience.

Grading the students' efforts proved to be a problem, primarily because of the loss of videotape capability, which would have permitted a more concrete record of their improvement. I was now forced to be more subjective but tried to weigh several factors alluded to above: improvement and regular participation in class activities and degree of difficulty of part assigned. I did not want to punish anyone for having a short role or give high grades to another simply because of a longer one. Using these criteria, and consulting with other faculty members who had been in the audience for the actual production, I was able to assign grades (with the assurance that I was being honest in evaluating their performance).

Aside from the formal evaluation, student improvement was formidable. Some who could barely utter a complete sentence in Spanish were now quite assured in their use of grammatically correct Spanish. Those who were good speakers added another dimension to their linguistic and overall competence. Several students decided to continue their stud-

ies in Spanish based on their experience in the course, or to participate in future productions of the Grupo Experimental de Teatro. One participant is now contemplating graduate studies in Hispanic theater.

Extremely positive course evaluations bore out my perceptions. Students consistently stressed that the course had given them the opportunity to use Spanish in a more interesting way than they would have received in a regular conversation section, that their use of the language improved, and that they now felt much more confident when using it.

Some also highlighted several aspects they believed could be improved. One point mentioned consistently by even the most enthusiastic of students dealt with classroom language. I directed the plays in English, first of all because I was not familiar enough with theater terminology in Spanish to do otherwise, and because of the pressure under which we operated, and given the fact that some of the students had only two years of the language, my directing in Spanish would have hindered progress in preparing the play. Some students might not have understood the directions the first time around, and I would have had to repeat them, etc. However, students reasoned otherwise, believing that the use of Spanish would have provided them with more opportunities to hear the language. I sacrificed linguistic skills to dramatic expediency but will reverse the process, to the greatest extent possible, the next time the course is offered.

The other aspect that elicited several student comments was how I arrived at casting decisions. As mentioned, most were made on the basis of prior knowledge of the students, my "intuition" of who fit a given role and physical or linguistic need. For some roles, I just "felt" that somebody would be perfect, with no real basis for this perception. The problem was not how I cast, but that I had

not openly told class members why I chose a particular person for a given role. For their part, once I made casting decisions, students were afraid to question them, believing tney would offend me by doing so. In future attempts, I shall delineate my reasons for choosing a given student for a particular part.

*
* *

When Spanish Dramatic Expression was first proposed it was agreed that its continuation would be contingent upon evaluation and enrollments. When the exhilaration caused by the performance abated, I decided that the course should be continued. It indeed demonstrated its ability to draw students and was successful in improving participants' command and appreciation of Spanish.

Improvements are needed: larger classroom, enrollment limited, and the videotape equipment made available.

In addition, some of the more positive unplanned benefits need to be exploited more fully. Primary among them is the presentation of the plays in other Spanish classes. Such an activity might also be expanded to include local secondary schools; teachers at that level are always anxious to have cultural events brought to them. Teachers bring their advanced students to us and thus buoy recruitment efforts.

Videotapes of the performances and dress rehearsals also should be made, to be used in literature or culture courses that study the works performed, for viewing in future years in other language classes or for teaching aspects of production and blocking to the Spanish Dramatic Expression class itself. They might also be used for recruitment and for attracting students in general to the Spanish course offerings of the department.

All in all, developing and teaching a course such as Spanish Dramatic Expression is a worthwhile experience. But the time and emotional involvement are staggering. One must be prepared to be drained both during and after the term. In spite of many sleepless nights, I would not trade this experience for any other teaching experience. It is now "in my blood," and like any good addict I will continue to stay high on Spanish drama as a way of teaching language skills, instilling student confidence and enthusiasm and providing life to a dozing Spanish program. I invite all of you to get hooked with me."

--Malcolm A. Compitello
Asst. Professor of Spanish
Dept. of Romance Languages
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI 48824

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question to Prof. Compitello

Audience:

You offer this course and have registration. What if twenty-five students enroll and you need seventeen for your play. What do you do then?

Prof. Compitello:

Find an additional play. I spent six hours the first night of class looking for a play that had seven characters in it because I had one that had six and I needed another with seven because I had thirteen enrolled. Hopefully, you never get twenty-five; we couldn't go that high in a conversation class. We were supposed to have twelve this year which would have made it easy; instead we had seventeen and I had to find another five parts. It's that kind of problem that has to be solved on the spur of the moment.

Audience:

In your paper, which I haven't read, do you list these plays you use? That is one of the difficulties we face--finding plays.

Prof. Compitello:

What we try to do, since Prof. Seniff is the language coordinator at MSU, is to use plays that he is teaching at the second year level. This year we used a textbook called En un acto, which is a collection of Latin-American plays. I would choose one of the ones that he was reading to perform. In addition, we performed a

second one. So the first year we did El Delantal blanco, which is short, very easily intelligible and funny; Retablillo de don Cristóbal by Lorca; and Las Aceitunas. Almost always I try to take a small part in one of these just to get involved with the students. This year we did the two plays El Censo and El Apuntador.

Question for Prof. Rassias

Audience:

You have mentioned several taboos that you would like to see violated in the classroom, and I would like to add one. One of the major taboos in education is that we should not seduce our students. Yet it seems to me that teaching is an act of seduction, and that eroticism subsumes intellectual seduction. I think that radical teaching, real radical teaching takes into account the free-flow of desire between teacher and student, student and teacher and student and student. I am not recommending mass orgy, just asking the question, which is also asked in Roland Barthes's very fine essay "Au séminaire" (L'Arc, 56[1974]:48-56): how can we include the desires of the student in the ideal, radical teaching model that I believe you are proposing?

Prof. Rassias:

In the sense that the teacher's domination is directed only toward getting the students themselves literally to take over. "Stage presence" stresses not so much the presence of the teacher as his/her ability to make the students interrelate. I like the notion of the "orgy," and that is in a sense what it is. It is a feast, and it is love, but it is love of the subject, love of the people communicating with each other. In the language classroom itself, there are, for every specific major aspect of language and the parts of speech and the like,

an array of techniques that help the teacher get students involved and have them understand the subject, and ultimately understand themselves.

Question to Prof. Rassias

Audience:

I know that you use a lot of audio-visual aids in your courses at Dartmouth. Could you perhaps describe the way in which you try to combine this kind of teaching with audio-visual aids?

Prof. Rassias:

Perhaps that is overstating what we really do in terms of the use of other materials. What we do is to have the teacher and the students working together with whatever the text is, or even a picture or photograph. It is not the word "audio-visual" so much as it is the technical assistance used to make grammatical points, which could be a pair of dice or dots on a blackboard that they have to fill in according to various instructions. And if the video laboratory is used to play its major role (something that I have been working on for about four or five years), the student will have even greater active visual and aural involvement with the material inasmuch as he or she will be responding to pre-recorded video-cassette programs of the instructor providing grammatical expositions, drilling, etc., that effectively reinforce the day's classroom activities. So, to answer the question, most of the audio-visual apparatus takes over in the laboratory. This is still being perfected: it is a five-stage process that allows the student again to interact with the material that we have gone through in the classroom. That is basically where it takes place.

Question to Prof. Rassias

Audience:

I agree with all Professor Rassias has said. I am a departmental head, and I would like to make two statements. Firstly, department heads get a lot of "flak" about not being innovative. In my own department, I cannot budge my people because it takes extra work. We put on a full-length play in every language. We have recruiting devices. We have a declamation contest. We bring in 350 students from a three-state area. We do a thing called "Dionysia." We bring in speakers. We have two days committed to competitive presentations of drama at the high-school, college and university level. But I have to fight them every step of the way. Every step of the way. But those in Spanish (unlike the panelists) are the hardest to move of all. My French and German students are writing their own plays and staging them. The Spanish think I am attacking the Pope if I suggest any slight alteration in their teaching style.

The second thing I would like to say is that I am blessed with a mostly tenured department. I have come to believe that we teach our personalities, and you cannot teach anybody how to do what you are doing, Professor Rassias, with your charisma. I am beginning in my cynical old age to believe that we are born teachers, and there is no blessed way on earth to teach somebody to make your success. I wish to God there were.

Prof. Rassias:

I thoroughly appreciate your remarks and we have all, I think, encountered resistance in various schools and various departments. I think what really counts is if there is one person on that faculty in that department

--you yourself, I am sure--setting the pace, the students themselves begin to take hold: the students themselves become the "front line" in bringing about change. It is hard to change tenured people; it is hard sometimes even because of the threat of the withholding of tenure for the younger faculty. It is very hard to get the indifferent faculty members to do these things, but when the students become the front line, and work in between, change does occur. We had that happen at my own institution.

What I have been speaking of all along is a commitment to the subject, a knowledge of how to approach it and a total giving of one's self to that theme. The techniques for releasing people to do that are available to all. As a result of what I have seen over these past fifteen years or so, and most specifically this past year through the Commission, I am so given to this, that I am tearing up and down the country to help. Anyone can do it, anyone who breathes can do this. It merely takes a little direction, minimal direction, to bring it about. And ultimately what happens is that the student-teacher relationship becomes so fruitful, so productive, that it starts sending out tremors. Other members in that department are going to have to shape up.

Audience:

How?

Prof. Rassias:

By the pressure of the students. At Dartmouth, without citing any specific department, there was a lot of resistance. And I did not want to interfere, obviously, in other people's departments; I would have liked to, but thought the better of it. But finally, I was invited by other departments to speak to them about what we

are doing, since our enrollments were skyrocketing. I think the proof of the techniques that I have described is evident when enrollment starts to swell in the literature and in the culture courses: then something is happening. And we were experiencing that in Romance languages and literatures in proportions of something like 500-600% increases in upper-level courses. Yet the other departments were very resistant because they thought it was not an intellectual or an academic approach. Ultimately, however, the students got wind of that and started to pressure those departments. Reluctantly, they accepted our techniques and now they too are experiencing similar increases in their advanced course enrollment. Majors are doubling and tripling, and the literary sections are being filled. It is a good thing when departments have students; I think it is the students who make the difference.

Audience:

I agree with you. But that is not all! Once I provided my faculty with a car to go hear you speak at Mars Hill, North Carolina. You know who went? My good people! How do I get these tenured people to turn out? And then I have to overload my good people, who are already doing everything you are talking about, and I cannot get my dean to promote them. They are putting on plays; they are swamped with work. Yet I cannot move my dean, or that other half of my department that is sitting right there very comfortably, bothered by these views that my good people are bringing in. How do you do it? How do you move these people? I am not an administrator; I cannot move them.

Prof. Rassias:

I hope your courage will never diminish, nor your voice ever become weak. You are the one providing the light

and the leadership, and I think the lazy, tenured ones will ultimately fade away. Ultimately!

Question to Prof. Compitello

Audience:

Prof. Compitello, were you a theater major?

Prof. Compitello:

No, as a matter of fact, I think I got into this because I am actually a very inhibited person, but I realized that I can put on an act in a classroom. The entire history is that in fifth grade I played the lead in a Dr. Seuss piece; after that I became so inhibited through negative feedback that until I got to graduate school I never acted. We had a fairly active theater program at Indiana, which we graduate students did all on our own. I acted several times, and when I got to Michigan State, since we did not have anything similar, I wanted to continue. Through the help of my wife, we formed a theater company. I proposed the Spanish Dramatic Expression course, and it does not take that much acting talent. The plays we put on with these students in this course were not necessarily excellent, but they were pretty good, if you consider that most of these students had not acted, or had only had two years of college Spanish. But we were willing to get in there and get our hands dirty, I think, and start it. I had never had any formal training in directing. I just said, "Well, I can do that." So I did it, and that is the way it started.

Prof. Seniff:

While we are on the topic of foreign language dramatic productions, I should like to mention that whenever you do produce a play, send out circulars and make it known

to your academic community what you are doing. Send them to the deans of the different colleges of your institution as well as to the President's office. Also, send them to all the civic and political leaders elsewhere in the community, because that is the only way you are going to achieve any visibility. It becomes a political problem at that level, I think. And I think that is the only way any progress will ever be made if you do decide to start promoting the dramatic activity on your campus.

Question to Prof. Rassias

Audience:

I will not even do a step or two of a jig, let alone pick up someone from the audience and start dancing around. I am much too inhibited and I think most people are. How did you break down your own inhibitions? Did you ever have any?

Prof. Rassias:

Definitely. And obviously, we get them from others. No question about it. When I was in elementary school, I remember, we went to hear an orchestra, for the first time, through the WPA. A man came in with fifty or so musicians, and we sat there and watched him go on for one hour in an absolutely stiff posture, leading his light classical music. I went up to the front of the class afterward, raised my hand, and quite seriously asked the teacher, "Miss Lambert, was that man good?" I really wanted to know. She looked at me as if I were a certified idiot and said "Good? He was excellent." I said, "Fine, please tell me why." And she said he was good because 1) he was perfectly stiff, 2) he was dignified, and 3) he was properly dressed. So I went through life judging people according to these criteria

until I heard Toscanini, and that blew it all apart because he was the opposite of all these characteristics.

In my own experience, I did have dramatic training but I do not believe that it is crucial. Rather, I think it was realizing the absolute urgency for understanding communication and sharing. I was exposed to this in life or death situations and, most dramatically, through the Peace Corps activities, where I devised some pragmatic, methodological concepts that are still being used. Also, it was coming to realize: who am I alone? No one. Who am I with someone else communicating openly? A real powerful force, because of the other person. And it is based on that simple logic that I need someone who might need me, and that the only way I could share is to go all out. And students themselves very, very definitely want this. They do not get it because most of us have been prejudiced by mediocre teachers. The cycle perpetuates itself. And no change will ever occur unless, through superhuman efforts, we blast out of these inhibitions.

To conclude, and to answer the question perhaps directly, it has been said that a true professional is an authentic human being, with obvious expertise underneath. But without that authenticity I do not think anyone could lay a claim to professionalism. I try to say, then, that to be authentic one has to be "up front," to use a current term. It also means to me "tuning in" on the wave length of the people with whom I am trying to communicate. It is not cheapening, I believe, the holy substance of the material we teach, but it <u>is</u> being as honest a human being as possible.

The Rassias Intensive Language Method goes to High School

by John Crevière, Susana Mastenbrook, and Patricia Peck

Classroom implementation of the Rassias Intensive Method of Language Instruction was begun in the fall of 1979 at East Grand Rapids High School, East Grand Rapids, Michigan. The program is still in effect with only minor modifications. The reasons for its implementation were:

a) Generation of enthusiasm for learning another language;
b) Improvement of basic language instruction methodology;
c) Greater depth in cross-cultural awareness.

Pre-Implementation Program History

East Grand Rapids High School was experiencing the national dilemma of declining enrollment in foreign language study; students, after two years of language study, had not yet achieved a sufficient level of linguistic proficiency allowing them to communicate with ease in another language. In the course of a meeting of the Foreign Language Department at East Grand Rapids High School (EGR) in December of 1977 Mr. C.E. Cleven, the Principal of EGR, commented on an article he had just read in Time entitled "Why Johnny can't Parler"; Mr. Cleven challenged the Department to stimulate beginning students in language in a manner similar to Professor Rassias' as a possible solution to the problem. Instructor Peck of EGR visited Professor Rassias at Dartmouth College in the summer of 1978 to explore the possibility of adopting and modifying such a dynamic approach at the secondary level. She returned to EGR enthusiastic about what she had observed and assured of the method's potential success. The instructors and administrators at EGR examined other programs but were most encouraged by the Rassias Method. It was then learned that Dr. Crevière, trained in the method by Professor Rassias, had implemented the program in French at Hope College, Holland, Michigan, in the spring of 1978. The EGR instructors observed the program at Hope Col-

lege. Subsequent discussions involving EGR administrators lead to proposing to the EGR School Board implementation of the method at EGR with Dr. Crevière serving as consultant. The School Board gave final approval in February 1979.

Structure of the Program

The double-credit, one-year, intensive Spanish course at EGR consists of two (2) daily hours of class: a one-hour Master Class taught by an EGR Spanish Faculty member and a one-hour review and reinforcement session conducted by an Apprentice Teacher (AT). The AT's are EGR students with sufficient proficiency in Spanish who have been trained in the Rassias methodology. The Master Teacher (MT), also trained in the Rassias methodology, introduces all new material, explains grammatical concepts, practices previously learned material and engages the students in free and structured conversation. Although the MT may use English upon occasion, the MT presents material through dramatization of dialogues and visual aids using the target language. In the Master Class students take surprise quizzes frequently and are evaluated after the completion of each lesson. A lesson is completed approximately every 6 to 7 days. The evaluation is both written and oral. Often the oral examination includes the use of visual aids related to the particular lesson. The student should be able to converse about it, or answer controlled questions relating to it. Often, drills which are learned in the AT session are randomly chosen and the student is required to demonstrate mastery of them.

The AT session, sometimes referred to as a drill session, consists of reinforcement of the material introduced by the MT. Through dramatization, backward build-up (repetition), visual aids and a variety of rapid-paced drills, the AT guides the students in mastering the material. To a certain extent the AT session is "supervised homework"; each student responds on an average of 60 to 75 times per class period by way of individual and choral responses. All mistakes are corrected immediately and the student who made the mistake is encouraged to repeat the

correction accurately. The AT never explains grammar nor speaks English. Although the number of students in a particular AT session varies, the maximum does not exceed ten (10). Thus the number of AT's required is dependent upon the number of students in the Master Class. If there are thirty students in the Master Class, there are three AT sessions.

MT's and AT's meet weekly to insure the coordination between their respective classes. The AT must follow procedure and lesson plans established by the MT.

AT's are required to spend at least one hour in preparation for each hour taught. This preparation consists in becoming totally familiar with the material the MT has prepared for the AT's. AT's are not required to write any drills. Creative AT's may contribute exercises to the MT before using them in order that the MT can verify cultural and linguistic accuracy.

AT's are remunerated both financially ($25.00 per week) and academically (one assistantship credit on transcript).

Materials

Since a textbook specifically designed for this methodology does not exist in Spanish, the EGR instructors surveyed a variety of existing texts. Ultimately no text was totally suitable; a text was chosen based on the relevancy of cultural material and the potential for creative dialogue pertinent to everyday human situations. The text was supplemented, according to need, by the writing of dialogues and especially by preparing the exercises and drills for the AT's.

The AT's have a bound copy of each day's lesson plan from the first to the final day of class. This allows them to review previously learned material and preview work from forthcoming lessons. It provides the MT with a detailed day by day lesson plan as well—allowing the MT to introduce the grammar or vocabulary that will be reinforced during the AT sessions.

Clearly, the organization and efficiency of the program provides for the smooth pace in which the lessons are taught and the material is learned. Repetition of material is minimized and the interest level is kept high.

Scheduling

Scheduling of participating students proved to be no major problem; it should be remembered that for the two hours invested daily, the students receive double credit toward graduation.

The Apprentice Teacher

One of the underlying principles of the Rassias method is the tenet that students are less inhibited in a peer situation; students are reluctant to speak out if they fear making a mistake, especially if their grade could be affected by it. The MT is solely responsible for grading the students. The AT is a necessary "support system" to the students and the MT. The AT session provides a threat-free, no-fault atmosphere contributing to a positive learning experience.

Serious consideration was given to potential problems arising in terms of maintaining discipline if high school students served as AT's. High school peer pressure often obliges one to be "part of the crowd," not allowing for individuality in leadership. Elders, even college students, could have posed a threat to high school students.

In order to insure proper discipline, without undermining the AT's position, it was decided that the MT's would visit AT sessions daily. Scheduling was of paramount importance; all AT sessions were scheduled within two one-hour blocks in order to facilitate MT visitation. The visitations did not take place on a pre-arranged basis, neither in the eyes of the AT's nor in those of the students, thereby contributing to proper classroom discipline.

AT Reaction/Experience

The immediate reaction of the AT's when asked to relate their own experiences was that they were learning more Spanish themselves as they were leading the review and reinforcement sessions. Each discovered the responsibility involved in becoming a "teacher" and discovered a lot about being a "student" as well. The AT's stressed the importance of variety in their lesson plans and the fast, steady pace with which the drills must be executed in order to maintain class interest. Also, they found that visual aids or realia relating to the lesson and dramatization of dialogue greatly enhanced learning.

During the first few weeks of the year, several found themselves devoting a lot of time to preparation as they were trying to perfect the method. Soon, however, the techniques became second nature and the AT's were able to concentrate upon student response.

Consensus opinion of the AT's was that being an AT made each of them realize the necessity of careful organization and self-discipline. They also came to realize the meaning of accepting responsibility.

At first, being a "peer instructor" implied being somewhat permissive; however, as the newness of the method wore off, each AT saw the importance of demanding good and accurate responses from the students and at the same time maintaining a friendly relationship with them.

It was generally agreed that being an AT was an invaluable experience in social interaction and human relationships.

The AT's enjoyed working as a team sharing ideas, props and activities. Through weekly meetings with the MT's they realized the importance of group problem solving.

Master Teacher Reaction/Experience

For the MT's, success is measured not only by the end product, i.e. the ability and confidence to use the language, but also by the positive and enthusiastic response to learning. In both instances the Rassias method has succeeded.

It is evident that the oral fluency of the beginning students in the method is superior to that of students in the traditional approach. It is gratifying to observe students speaking Spanish outside of the classroom.

Normal behavioral classroom problems were lessened because of student interest and eagerness to learn. As the students were becoming more enthusiastic about what they were learning and the speed at which they were learning it, it motivated the MT's to furnish a 200% effort. More interest was shown on the part of students in Spanish-speaking countries, people and cultural mores. As the students started to lose their inhibitions and attempted more conversations in Spanish, the MT's performance became more spontaneous and lessons became more personalized. The students sensed the MT's pleasure in teaching and classroom atmosphere became both friendly and productive.

The highlight of teaching the intensive course is seeing and hearing students enjoying learning the language and being confident in using it.

Evaluation of the Program

The program was evaluated through the administration of a standardized test (MLA-LA form) and through attitudinal surveys given to both students and their parents.

Results of Standardized Test

The test was administered to the students in the one-year Intensive Program and to the students completing the 2nd year of the traditional program. Three areas of linguistic proficiency were tested: listening comprehension, reading and writing.

Total Average Score:	Traditional 47.15%	Intensive 47.3%
Average Scores:		
Listening	45.43%	48.56%
Reading	39.87%	38.89%
Writing	55.56%	57.22%

Results of the Attitudinal Surveys

It would be too lengthy to reproduce the results of the entire surveys. The essential question is whether or not the program was favorably viewed by the students and their parents.

To the question "Would you recommend this course to other students?" 90% of the students responded "Yes." In response to the question "What did you like the most about the course?" the most common answers were:

a) Having acquired the ability and the confidence to communicate in Spanish;
b) Having learned more than they thought they would;
c) Having learned in an easy and enjoyable way.

Many students indicated that the small size of the AT session was beneficial in terms of the time allotted each individual student to learn to manipulate the language and to use it. They also appreciated the AT session because of the occasion to get to know their classmates.

The parents were asked if their child enjoyed the course less, as much as, or more than other courses; 67% responded "more than other courses." Comments that parents made:

"We are most pleased with the progress (our daughter) has made this year. We have a son who completed four years of another language and couldn't speak it as well as our daughter."

"This child is the second to take Spanish. The Intensive Course has been much more interesting and involving. Comparing the two children, the one taking the Intensive Course is learning far better, especially fluency."

"I am very impressed with the program. (Our daughter) seems enthused and does not tire of having two hours of Spanish a day which was my original concern. I think it has been a very positive learning experience for her."

It is interesting to note that in response to the question "Has your child talked to you about the Intensive Spanish Course?", 25% said "as often as about other courses" and 67% indicated "frequently."

Enrollment

The following chart indicates the percentage of students at EGR enrolled in modern language classes during the last four years.

Fall	French	German	Spanish
1977	12.2	4.9	18.6
1978	11.6	4.1	20.1
1979	10.5	5.2	22.9
1980	10.6	4.6	25.1

An analysis of student enrollment in beginning Spanish in 1979-1980 reveals that 43% opted for the Intensive Course. One year later, in 1980-1981, 68% of students enrolled in beginning Spanish opted for the Intensive Course.

Retention

51.4%, (58.1%—excluding graduated seniors), of students finishing the traditional 2nd year program opted to continue their study of Spanish.

74.2%, (95.8%—excluding graduated seniors), of students finishing the Intensive Course opted to continue their study of Spanish.

From the Principal, Mr. C.E. Cleven

Will Administration support the continuance of the Intensive Program in Spanish at East Grand Rapids High School? The Principal's reaction is:

> During a period when the high school enrollment is declining at rapid rate, and the time has come for us seriously to consider dropping several programs, we find one program, Intensive Spanish, that is gaining in numbers of students enrolled. This is somewhat surprising, as the students' investment is much greater in terms of time than in other classes--the students are required to spend two hours each day in class. The very

fact that enrollment is increasing in Intensive Spanish is an indication that students are finding real value in the class. Teachers who are experienced in the teaching of Spanish are pleasantly surprised with the fluency of our students in the language and the students are very pleased with their achievement. Questionnaires which were given to the students and their parents near the end of the first year of the class indicated that both parents and students were extremely supportive of the program.

As principal of East Grand Rapids High School, I am very enthusiastic about the Intensive Spanish program, very proud of the effort made by two outstanding teachers, and hopeful that the methods and techniques will be adopted in our French and German classes.

Book Review

by Howard B. Altman

Paul Simon, The Tongue-Tied American: Confronting the Foreign Language Crisis. New York: Continuum Publishing Corp., 1980. $12.95.

In recent years it has been obvious that one of the hardest working supporters of foreign-language learning in American classrooms is Congressman Paul Simon of Illinois. At his urging (along with several House colleagues), Jimmy Carter appointed in April 1978 the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies, on which Simon served with distinction. He is also one of eighteen leaders from business, labor, government, education and the media to serve on the National Council on Foreign Languages and International Studies, chartered in May, 1980, as a follow-up to the Commission's Report (November 1979).

In The Tongue-Tied American (Simon's fourth book), he argues forcefully and convincingly that America is in the midst of a foreign language crisis. Evidence abounds from such diverse areas as diplomacy, international trade, national security and educational and cultural requirements. Many of the facts are already known to foreign-language teachers (though not necessarily to the general public), but the cumulative statistics present a devastating picture. Consider just a few facts:

-- Fewer than four percent of American high school graduates have studied more than two years of a foreign language.

-- As of 1976 only 18.9 per cent of American students in high school were exposed to a foreign language, down from 36 per cent in 1915.

-- Less than one per cent of our elementary school pupils today are enrolled in foreign-language instruction.

-- The language competency of American diplomats overseas is woefully inadequate: in 1978, for example, only six of sixty foreign service officers in Iran were minimally proficient in Farsi.

-- American trade with much of the world suffers because people tend to buy from those who speak their language. Mistranslations of American advertising slogans serve to amuse or even insult prospective clients and further increase our trade deficit ("Come Alive With Pepsi" almost appeared in the Chinese version of Reader's Digest as "Pepsi brings your ancestors back from the grave").

Congressman Simon's research is inexhaustible: the picture he paints is often a gloomy one. Yet he points with pride to a good many rays of sunshine emanating from our schools and colleges, where one can find much excellent language teaching, both traditional and non-traditional. In addition, Simon examines the work being done on the state level where he sees the promotion of foreign-language study and awareness, cooperation with the ethnic-linguistic minorities residing in relevant geographical areas and collaboration with colleagues in international education.

Perhaps the most significant portion of the book is the final chapter entitled "Follow-Through," for it is here that Simon offers concrete suggestions for confronting our foreign-language crisis. His plan of action is addressed to: college and university administrators, teachers, elementary and secondary schools, state and federal level programs, business, labor and foundation leaders, parents and--to everyone. His suggestions are sound, reasonable and viable in most cases. They are "must" reading for all those

concerned with the future of foreign-language instruction in the United States.

This is a book that foreign-language teachers will read with profit, but if the readership is limited to foreignlanguage teachers it will do little to solve the myriad problems Congressman Simon has described in detail. It is therefore unfortunate that, at $12.95, The Tongue-Tied American is probably priced too high to appeal to a popular market. If the publisher could issue an inexpensive paperback edition at, say, $4.95 or less, many foreign-language teachers would be tempted to buy copies for those decision-makers capable of reducing or expanding our programs with the stroke of a pen. This book provides the rationale, the justification and the practical evidence for strengthening our foreign-language competence as a nation. It deserves a wide reading, far wider than its price will doubtless permit.

The foreign-language teaching profession owes a great debt of thanks to Paul Simon. One of the ways we can begin to repay this debt is by buying and reading this book and urging others to do so.

--Howard B. Altman
Professor of Modern Languages
University of Louisville
Louisville, KY 40292

THE RAM'S HORN - GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

The Ram's Horn will publish articles, anecdotes, brief accounts of successful teaching practices and short news items pertaining to all aspects of the Russian Language Method and the Dartmouth Intensive Language Model. You are encouraged to send in your contributions. The following may be of assistance.

WHAT IS THERE TO WRITE ABOUT?

Write about a subject with which you are familiar. Articles can be submitted on any subject related to teaching foreign languages, international studies, recent testing programs, new creative techniques, new grant proposals and awards, etc. This may concern experiences in the classroom, abroad, in American-ethnic communities or original projects.It just might deal with the tactics of pedagogy. The only requisite is that your manuscript describe some successful aspect of your teaching that you wish to share with others.

WHAT ABOUT STYLE?

Write in a clear, conversational style. Use strong verbs. You can be most effective by being simple and direct. You should avoid jargon. Remember The Ram's Horn readers are busy people who want practical information, successful techniques and ideas that will make them think.

Length should be determined by the scope of your topic. Be concise, but provide all the necessary information. Manuscripts generally should not exceed 600-800 words (4 pages).

Please avoid inadvertent sexist terminology: a plural pronoun and verb (e.g., students they, teachers/do, make, learn) serve as well as the indefinite use of third person singular pronouns (he, she/does, makes, learns). Footnotes should be avoided,and necessary references should be given

as part of the prose.

HOW DO I PREPARE THE FINAL MANUSCRIPT?

Send an original and one clear copy. The manuscript should be typed on white 8 1/2 x 11 inch paper. Double space everything. Include tables, figures, charts, etc., on separate pages. If you must footnote, follow MLA style-PLEASE. Make a cover sheet for each copy of the manuscript showing the proposed title of the article and complete identification and address for each author.

WHY ARE MANUSCRIPTS REJECTED?

The most common reasons for rejection are: (1) subject and style that are inappropriate for our audience; (2) repetition of a recently published topic; (3) use of a procedur. that might violate copyright law; and (4) inaccurate information.

WHAT ELSE SHOULD I KNOW?

Generally, The Ram's Horn cannot consider any manuscript that is being considered for publication elsewhere simultaneously.

Authors are responsible for the accuracy of all material submitted. Unless previously copyrighted, all manuscripts accepted for publication in The Ram's Horn are copyrighted by the publisher and become the exclusive property of the publisher.

All manuscripts accepted for publication will be edited to conform to The Ram's Horn style and space limitations.

WHERE DO I SEND MY ARTICLES?

Submit all manuscripts to The Ram's Horn, Editor,

Language Outreach, Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H. 03755
All manuscripts will be acknowledged within weeks, but it may be several months before a decision to accept or to reject can be made.